

# *Tidelines*

New Hampshire Coastal Program

## *Roadmap for Success*

**L**ock seven coastal management staff in a room with an empty flip chart, a great facilitator and copious amounts of chocolate and what do you get? A strategic plan.

In the upcoming months, the Coastal Program's strategic plan will be finalized and distributed to our partners and posted on



*Green frog, Dover*

our website. It will be a map going forward, guiding our work and defining our niche in coastal management. During the course of the planning process, Coastal Program staff found out that many of the elements of our current workplans already fit into the priorities of the strategic plan; they just needed a name. We would also like to thank our partners and constituents who contributed their time and feedback into developing our plan.

Over the last few years, NHCP has undergone many changes, including federal budget cuts, a programmatic move to DES, a physical move to a new office and the transition of staff. The timing was ripe to examine the most effective ways to use our resources to best serve our constituents' needs.

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*Fresh Creek, Dover*



## Manager's Musings

By Ted Diers, Coastal Program Manager

The federal Office of Budget and Management has recommended cuts to NOAA funding because of its failure to report on the success of coastal zone management act programs. Needless to say, that has gotten our attention!

How do we measure our success? That question is driving a flurry of activity not just here in New Hampshire, but also around the nation. Whether funding comes from foundations or government, everyone wants to ensure the success of projects and programs.

Here at the NHCP, we are trying a number of methods to measure success. These are:

**National Performance Tracking Measures:** As of this summer, NHCP indicators are being incorporated into the Coastal Zone Management Act Performance Measurement System, which tracks national performance measures of the effectiveness of coastal management programs in achieving CZMA and strategic objectives.

**Third Party Assessment:** Last year, we initiated a third-party program assessment on the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, a program supported by NHCP both through funding and direct staff time. That assessment made a number of recommendations to improve the program. We will use third party assessments to look at other programs in the future.

**Monitoring:** Our volunteer monitoring programs look at a variety of coastal ecosystem measures, including water quality and habitat integrity.

**Strategic Plan:** Strategic planning establishes performance objectives for addressing critical management issues. Our plan is soon to be unveiled in its final form and has been in development since last fall. So far it has helped us renew our commitment to some past priorities (habitat restoration and technical assistance), come up with new priorities in areas where little is being done (ocean resources) and identify an encompassing theme for some of our strongest work (science based decision making).

Measuring success is difficult. How do you quantify outcomes that would not happen in your program's absence? At the NHCP, we are working hard to find answers to this question. We have plenty of work yet to accomplish before we declare "success" and go home.

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**Cathy Coletti**, writer/editor  
**Karen Coletti**, designer





## How do we measure success?

Information from New Hampshire will soon be incorporated into a national database showing the effectiveness of coastal zone management programs.

In 2003, the federal Office of Management and Budget gave coastal management programs a failing mark in documenting the outcomes of our work. A dark shadow loomed in the corner of program offices everywhere: there was no way to show the tangible results of coastal zone management on a national level.

Enter the Coastal Zone Management Act Performance Measurement System. This tracking system provides a way for NOAA to assess how well program activities are achieving the goals of the Coastal Zone Management Act. NOAA will use the information to report back to Congress.

“Congress wants to know where the money is going. We are using public money, and the public has the right to know how that money is being spent,” said Beth Lambert, Coastal Program point person for the New Hampshire portion of the database.

Six categories of performance measures will be phased in two at a time through the next three years. This year’s are public access and government coordination. Some measures will directly tie into where NHCP targets its resources, like water quality. The remaining measures are habitat, hazards, and



*Coastal Program staff on fingerpier boat dock in Portsmouth, a public access project partially funded by NHCP. Staff left to right: (back row) Beth Lambert, Miles Waniga, Ted Diers, Chris Williams, Dave Murphy, Mary Power, and Liz Durfee. (front row) Cathy Coletti, Sally Soule*

community development. By fiscal year 2009, NHCP will report on all six.

Performance tracking information will provide information about coastal resources, socioeconomic conditions, and management activities in both New Hampshire and the nation’s coastal zone. In addition, the information will help coastal programs communicate with the public about coastal management challenges and priorities.

“Over time, the Coastal Zone Management Act Performance Measurement System will provide information to help identify state and national trends in coastal resource management and demonstrate success in preserving, protecting, and restoring the

resources of the coastal zone for this and future generations,” said Laurie Rounds of NOAA. Rounds led the development of the Performance Measurement System.

Some work is not captured by the system. For instance, networking with other agencies and organizations drives NHCP’s success, but is not a measurable outcome in the system.

“We are a focal point for partnership building. And these relationships build long term capacity for coastal projects,” said Lambert.

To learn more about the national indicator system, visit <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/success/measure.html>.



## spotlight on NROC

# Managing Growing Pains: NROC Protects Coastal Communities

By Kirsten Weir  
N.H. Sea Grant Science Writer

New Hampshire's population is the fastest-growing in New England, and much of that growth is happening in communities near the coast. As farms and forests are paved over for new homes and businesses, more polluted runoff spills into streams, rivers and bays, threatening the coastal ecosystem.

The Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) is reaching out to help Seacoast communities manage their growing pains. The goal is to help communities protect their wildlife habitats, agricultural lands and water resources – while still preserving each town's

economic vitality and unique cultural character.

After a town has applied for and been selected for NROC assistance, NROC team members make a customized presentation to the community, using up-to-date GIS maps to illustrate the town's natural resources. Then, over the following year, N.H. Sea Grant extension specialist Julia Peterson, NROC coordinator Amanda Stone and other NROC partners work closely with board members and other community volunteers. Working together, the team develops and implements town-

*“NROC helped us see beyond our community's boundaries and begin to recognize the importance of looking at the big picture and working with our neighbors to protect our valuable natural resources.”*

*~Exeter NROC participant*

specific strategies for protecting the community's natural resources as it grows.

Last year, the NROC team assisted New Durham, Wakefield and Deerfield. This year, Rollinsford and Fremont residents are working with the coalition. Since 1999, NROC has worked with 15 coastal watershed towns. With NROC support, those communities have developed open-space plans, formed management subcommittees, conducted private well surveys, developed natural resource inventory maps, started water-quality monitoring programs, and raised millions of



*New Durham, a current NROC community*  
*Photo by Bill McGrew*

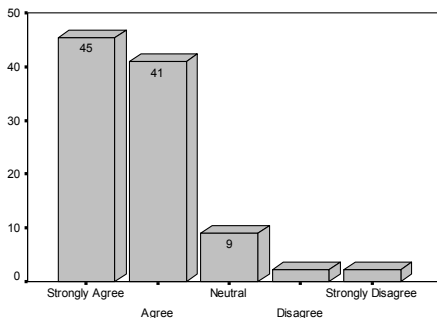




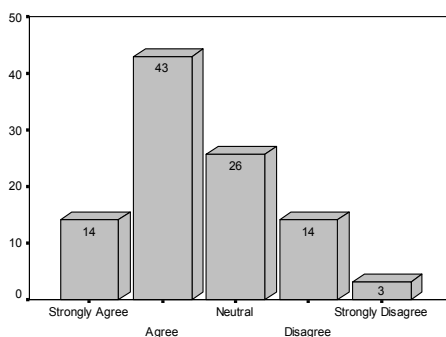
*NROC public meeting in Wakefield*

### NROC Assessment Results

Overall, I believe the NROC program is beneficial to communities in the seacoast region of NH



Community residents would not have effectively addressed natural resource issues without the assistance of NROC



The assessment showed that most community members found NROC to be an effective and beneficial program.

dollars in bond funds to protect land critical to water quality, wildlife habitat, scenic views and recreation.

NROC partners include UNH Cooperative Extension, N.H. Sea Grant, DES New Hampshire Coastal Program and other DES programs, N.H. Estuaries Project, Rockingham Regional Planning Commission, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Southern N.H. Regional Planning Commission, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the National NEMO Network. NHCP's support is critical in

maintaining the effective delivery, implementation, tracking, and evaluation of all NROC activities.

## N-ROCKS!

“Mirror, mirror on the wall...”

The NROC story doesn't have a fairytale ending. The program rolls with the needs of the communities it serves. And there's no end to the work.

By using evaluations to adapt the program, NROC, a coalition of agencies and organizations working with coastal communities, breeds success.

Recently, NHCP received the results of a third-party assessment that measured both internal effectiveness and community benefits received from NROC. The Coastal Program initiated the study to better document where NOAA dollars were being spent.

“The study was incredibly useful,” said Julia Peterson, N.H. Sea Grant extension specialist and NROC partner.

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*“Until NROC came along, I think many townspeople were frustrated. We had rewritten the master plan and did not see any of it being implemented. NROC brought the interested people together, organized us and showed us how to get the jobs done. Because of this, I am hopeful that our town will be a better place to live in the future.”*

*~Strafford NROC participant*



*Kayaking in the Cocheo River Watershed, Dover*

### *N-Rocks continued from page 5*

One thing that NROC is now doing as a result of the study is looking for a better way to transition work to the community at the conclusion of the program. A “passing of the torch” celebration or official ceremony might provide a stronger transition. Peterson added, “Of course, we’re always here to help.”

One of the major strengths cited in the evaluation is NROC’s ability to connect people with the resources and guidance they need to get things done. Prior to the program, communities are often unsure on where to go for help. NROC also re-energizes a community by bringing forth new leaders.

Often the marriage of environmental action programs and social science helps provide key information on target audience and the success of programs, according to Peterson. The assessment took a deep look at NROC’s audiences through personal interviews and a survey, providing valuable information on community progress from decisions to actions.

*Brian Eisenhauer, sociologist and associate director of the Center for the Environment at Plymouth State University, praised NROC as an effective program. “NROC is a valuable and cost effective program that provides many benefits to communities,” Eisenhauer said, “and... the resulting conservation of natural resources is achieved in an inclusive manner that empowers and mobilizes communities to engage in conservation actions.”*

## *Gulf of Maine Council Corner*

Across the Gulf of Maine watershed, agencies and nonprofits work to remove failing dams, replace undersized and impassable culverts, and improve fish passage over human-made obstacles. Financial and political support for these restoration projects is growing, but few projects are monitored after they take place. Consistent monitoring across the region will help evaluate the success of individual restoration projects, make comparisons between projects, and predict possible outcomes of future projects.

In June, more than 70 river scientists, engineers, and resource managers came together to develop monitoring guidance for the Gulf of Maine Region at the River Barrier Removal Monitoring Workshop. Through a series of breakout groups and plenary discussions, participants developed a list of monitoring parameters and reporting standards in four topical areas: hydrology, hydraulics, and sediment; fish; instream habitat; and wetland and riparian ecology.

The next step in developing the guidance is for the steering committee of conference organizers to take the input from the conference and develop the monitoring framework.

Partners in organizing the workshop included NHCP, NOAA Restoration Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Massachusetts Riverways Program, Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans, New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government, and American Rivers. The workshop was modeled on a similar process used in 1999 to develop a salt marsh monitoring framework now used across the Gulf of Maine coast. NHCP has been a leader in salt marsh monitoring.



### *Roadmap to Success continued from page 1*

There were several priorities identified in the planning process.

- **Initiate ocean resources research**

The Coastal Program is working towards developing a partnership with other agencies to map offshore resources and uses, like fish and shellfish habitats, bird and whale migration routes, commercial fishing grounds, recreational areas, and shipping lanes. As the demands placed upon offshore resources increases, the ability to anticipate and resolve conflicts between these resources and existing and future uses will be critical.

- **Support science-based decision making.**

Science forms the basis for

change. It documents what is happening in our environment and can help municipalities and others working in the planning field make the case why regulations need to be stronger. This includes both the delivery of science, such as through the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, and the collection of data through research and monitoring.

- **Expand habitat restoration.**

The Coastal Program will continue to partner with watershed groups and communities to implement restoration projects in the 17 coastal zone communities, but the focus will shift from salt marsh restoration to river restoration. The Coastal Program will also be at the forefront of developing river barrier removal monitoring protocols on a regional level.



*Learning more about ocean resources is a priority in the new strategic plan.*

## *New Hampshire Coast by the Numbers*

**\$781,500** Dollars leveraged for activities that provide or enhance public access to the coast. This figure includes money and in-kind services from other agencies and organizations that matched NHCP's \$224,100.

**\$413,400** Resources directly used for technical assistance. This figure includes direct staff time by Coastal Program and the Rockingham and Strafford Planning Commissions as well as financial assistance through our pass-through grant program.

**\$224,100** Dollars spent on activities that provide or enhance public access to the coast. These numbers include staff time and dollars passed through to local communities and organizations.

**3,821** Number of participants reached through outreach activities by NHCP and project partners.

**136** Number of education and training activities enabled through coastal program grant funds.

*Note*-These figures are for fiscal year 2005 (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006)

# *The Rip Tide*

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